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General Assembly

FIFTIETH SESSION

Official Records

THIRD COMMITTEE
4th meeting
held on
Tuesday, 10 October 1995
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 4th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. TSHERING (Bhutan)

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AGENDA ITEM 103: ELIMINATION OF RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (continued)*

AGENDA ITEM 104: RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION (continued)*

* Items considered together.

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16 October 1995

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 103: ELIMINATION OF RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (continued) (A/50/18, A/50/425-S/1995/787, A/50/467, 468, 476 and 493)

AGENDA ITEM 104: RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION (continued) (A/50/390 and Add.1, 407 and 485)

1. Mr. LACLAUSTRA (Spain), speaking on behalf of the European Union, firmly condemned the practice of ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia and stressed that it should in no way be considered legitimized in the context of a peace settlement. It was of great importance that those responsible should be tried by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and that the international community should contribute decisively to the rebuilding of societies shattered by years of conflict. The Union hoped that stable political settlements could be reached in the conflicts in Chechnya, Tajikistan, Nagorny Karabakh and Abkhazia and called on all parties concerned to redouble their efforts in that respect.

2. The States members of the European Union were concerned about the many serious incidents of racial or ethnic discrimination and racially motivated violence in their own societies. In addition to actions undertaken at the national level, they had launched a Union-wide effort to combat those manifestations. In 1994, the heads of State and Government of the European Union had decided to elaborate an overall strategy to combat acts of racism and xenophobic violence. A consultative commission of eminent personalities had been assisting the Union in that regard. Other measures relating to the laws and judicial and administrative procedures of member States concerning racism and xenophobia were under consideration. The work of the International Tribunal for Rwanda and the setting up of a commission of inquiry in Burundi should help counter the pervasive climate of impunity in those countries.

3. Wherever racial violence occurred, a sound judicial system, including an adequate legal basis and sufficient enforcement mechanisms, must be ensured. The European Union had contributed both observers and resources to the human rights field operations in Rwanda and Burundi and called for an increase in the financial means placed at the disposal of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in that regard. The Union was convinced of the need for a conference on peace, security and stability in the Great Lakes region in Africa to reduce the deep-seated causes of instability in the region. All countries in the area must commit themselves to the same objectives, at the same time and with the same determination.

4. Addressing the root causes of ethnic violence involved the development of early-warning measures to prevent and respond to conflicts. The treaty-monitoring bodies were in a position to make a significant contribution in that regard. As part of the ongoing efforts for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and other relevant mechanisms, in particular the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, should devise an active approach to promoting

tolerance. Other relevant actors, such as regional bodies and non-governmental organizations, should also contribute to the implementation of the Decade.

5. Turning to item 104, he said that the European Union reaffirmed its full recognition of the right to self-determination, the exercise of which was intrinsically linked to the enjoyment of other human rights. Democratic and representative political structures could be of paramount importance in averting any potential conflicts between the right of self-determination and the territorial integrity of sovereign States. Massive violations of the human rights of persons belonging to minorities had accounted for some of the most persistent conflicts in the past few years. Efforts by Governments to strengthen the rule of law and democratic institutions could help avert serious crises. The international community could play an important role in supporting those efforts through technical assistance and advisory services.

6. The European Union expressed its deepest satisfaction at the recent signing of the Interim Agreement between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, and urged both sides to continue working to implement the provisions of the Agreement and to refrain from any action that might affect the status quo until the conclusion of the ongoing negotiations. The Union, which continued to be the main donor for the occupied territories, remained concerned about the budget deficit of the Palestinian Authority for 1995 and called upon all members of the donor community to make their contributions to meet its needs.

7. The European Union welcomed the signing of the Treaty of Peace between Israel and Jordan and the recent resumption of negotiations between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic. It also hoped that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon would soon be restored within the framework of the Middle East peace process.

8. The European Union reiterated that the status quo in Cyprus was unacceptable and supported the efforts of the Secretary-General to bring about a negotiated and comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus question in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. With regard to Western Sahara, the Union called upon both parties to refrain from anything that would hinder the holding of a free and fair referendum for the exercise of the right of self-determination. The European Union continued to support a dialogue without preconditions between Portugal and Indonesia on East Timor and encouraged all efforts aimed at a just, comprehensive and internationally acceptable settlement of the question of East Timor in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

9. The Union called upon the Myanmar authorities to ensure full and free participation by all political and ethnic groups in the political process and the restoration of democratic institutions in that country. It welcomed the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi as a first step in that direction. The Union welcomed the steps towards national reconciliation in Haiti and stressed again the need for a thorough review of logistical and administrative procedures in time for the presidential elections scheduled for the end of 1995. The Union continued to support the efforts of the people of Haiti themselves to ensure security and democracy.

10. Mr. MEKDAD (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his country's Constitution and laws demonstrated its active participation in the fight against racism and racial discrimination, as did the fact that it was a signatory to all the relevant international conventions.

11. He said that his country supported the Middle East peace process because of its belief in the underlying principles of that process, which should not be used to satisfy Israeli ambitions and confirm its control over occupied Syrian and Palestinian land. Israel had continued for nearly five decades to deny the Palestinians their most basic human rights, the most important of which was the right to self-determination.

12. He wondered why so much of the world kept silent in the face of Israel's infractions of human rights and continued illegal occupation of the Syrian Golan and South Lebanon, which did nothing to promote regional peace and security, but rather, exposed the region and the rest of the world to serious danger.

13. The right to self-determination and the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination were prerequisites for all human rights. Failure to grant the freedom of people living wholly or partly under foreign occupation would in no way contribute to security and stability, nor achieve the goal of those who had founded the United Nations, that mankind should enjoy rights and live in dignity.

14. Mr. FERNÁNDEZ (Cuba) said that, despite the great victory for humanity represented by the dismantling of apartheid, the emergence in recent years of new forms of racism, more insidious and difficult to combat, had demonstrated the need for continuing vigilance and action. The resurgence of racism and xenophobia, combined with the emergence of extreme right-wing political organizations, Fascist groups and neo-Nazi parties were cause for grave concern. The right to freedom of expression and the right of association must no longer be used as a smokescreen to hide incitement to racial hatred and xenophobic violence and, in that connection, he stressed the importance of article 4 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. His country endorsed the call for more forceful action against such repugnant practices.

15. His delegation was particularly concerned by the institutionalization of racism. In such cases, hate and discrimination were fomented to serve political ends, borders between countries were blocked to stop immigration, social welfare programmes were cut and affirmative action programmes eliminated, and draconian legislation was instituted to prevent the children of immigrants from gaining access to basic health and education services. In that connection, his Government fully endorsed the work of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. It also supported the recommendation of the Economic and Social Council with regard to the possibility of convening a world conference against racism, racial and ethnic discrimination, xenophobia and other related contemporary forms of intolerance. It hoped that the Special Rapporteur and the Programme of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination would receive the additional resources needed.

16. The right of every State to the full exercise of its national sovereignty and of every people to self-determination, free of foreign interference or intervention, was the foundation of the post-war legal order and of the United Nations. Yet concepts such as "limited sovereignty" and the "right of interference" were gaining influence. The United Nations had to seek other ways to promote peace, security and development. A matter of concern were the repeated attempts to modify the concept of self-determination, introducing ideas and criteria which failed to correspond to the Charter and to the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. The Third Committee must, sooner or later, take that matter into consideration in order to eliminate such inappropriate approaches.

17. Peace could be attained, above all, by respecting the territorial integrity, cultural diversity and political plurality of all nations. Certain States, far from yielding to ideas imposed from without or to the call of uniformity, were claiming their own voice within the United Nations and the right to development and to provide their people with a dignified life.

18. Exercise of the right of self-determination was a precondition for the realization of all human rights. Universal respect for human rights could not be attained under conditions of foreign occupation or domination. In that connection, the agreement concluded between Palestine and Israel was encouraging. His country hoped that it would lead to a just and lasting solution which would embrace all the States in the region and under which the Palestinian people could exercise its inalienable rights, including the right to its own fully independent State.

19. His Government would also continue to claim from the United States of America the return of the territory of the naval base of Guantánamo, taken from Cuba against the will of its people.

20. His country commended the work and endorsed the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on the question of the use of mercenaries. It was to be hoped that such pernicious practices could be stopped by the end of the century.

21. Mr. TELLO (Mexico) said that United Nations efforts to combat racism and racial discrimination over the past 50 years had mainly been directed towards the eradication of apartheid. The fruit of those efforts, was a united and democratic South Africa, without racial distinctions.

22. Sadly, new forms of racism and xenophobia were emerging throughout the world, giving rise to concerns within the international community and preventing thousands of individuals from the full exercise of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. The United Nations must make one of its primary goals the eradication of those phenomena, basing its efforts on the Programme of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination. In that connection, his Government wished to acknowledge the important contribution of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination , xenophobia and related intolerance, especially in view of the severe financial limitations under which he had been working.

23. His delegation was concerned by the significant delay in issuing the documentation related to the agenda item on racism and racial discrimination. As in the previous year, it regretted the tardy publication of the report of the Special Rapporteur which, had it been available, could undoubtedly have contributed more to efforts in that area.

24. Respect for the richness of cultural diversity was basic to the elimination of racism and xenophobia. In practical terms, the campaign against racism and xenophobia must be carried out by developing educational programmes, punishing those responsible for such practices, opening up new opportunities for members of racial and ethnic minorities and ensuring, at all levels, respect for human dignity.

25. Of particular concern to his delegation was the increase in racism and xenophobia against migrant workers and their families. Racist statements, blaming all the evils of society on immigration, were often part of election campaigns. Such pronouncements resulted in a climate of hostility and violence against immigrants. In that connection, his Government opposed proposition 187 which, if implemented, would bar children of immigrants in the state of California from health, education and social services, in violation of the basic human rights of one of the most vulnerable migrant groups. Respect for the human rights of migrant workers, independent of their status, must be granted in countries where those workers lived. All Governments should accordingly take firmer action to combat racism directed against migrant worker populations.

26. Ms. FENG Cui (China) said that the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations gave added significance to consideration of the topic of the elimination of racism and racial discrimination. Over the past 50 years, in accordance with its Charter, the United Nations had made outstanding contributions towards decolonization, the elimination of apartheid and the promotion of international cooperation in the economic and social fields. Its efforts to combat racism had been vital to ensuring human rights and fundamental freedoms and maintaining international peace and security. Today the international community had accepted as a basic human right the idea of equality among individuals regardless of race, colour or religion. Activities implemented during the first two decades to combat racism and racial discrimination had had an important impact in many countries. The Third Decade would take the struggle to a new level.

27. In 1994, South Africa, under United Nations auspices, had held its first democratic election, signalling the end of apartheid. That great victory for the South African people, and the African peoples in general, had grown out of a long and arduous struggle, supported by the international community. Yet, the struggle against racism around the globe was far from over. Neo-Nazi activities, xenophobia, intolerance and racial conflict were part of the current climate. The world was going through a transitional period as old patterns were being replaced by new ones. It was a good opportunity for the international community to eliminate all forms of racism.

28. The reports submitted by the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance had helped provide a better understanding of racism in its current forms and had given

impetus to the fight against it. The international community must create the conditions needed for the Special Rapporteur to continue his work. It must also mobilize more resources and take more effective action to realize the objectives of the Programme of Action for the Third Decade.

29. The right to self-determination of nations and peoples under colonial rule and foreign occupation was a principle of international law and a universal right recognized by the United Nations. A correct understanding and preservation of that right was in keeping with the interests of all peoples and of the international community as a whole. It precluded foreign invasion or interference, and implied respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations and for the right of peoples to choose their own political future and social system. The numerous United Nations instruments on human rights provided clear explanations as to the application of the principle of the right to self-determination. The international community must support the struggle of people for self-determination and oppose any attempt to create racial tension or violate the territorial integrity of a nation under the pretext of safeguarding self-determination; such attempts only intensified racial conflicts, which might trigger civil war and regional conflict and, ultimately, threaten international peace and security.

30. Her delegation welcomed the recent signing by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization of the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which represented a further step on the road to peace in the Middle East. It was not the final solution, however. The Palestinian people would not yet be able to enjoy fully the human rights and fundamental freedoms, including self-determination, which had long been denied to it. The international community should continue to strive for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, which would contribute to stability in the region and the world as a whole.

31. Mr. BOUCHMARINOV (Russian Federation) said that the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights had defined the speedy elimination of all forms of racism, xenophobia and related intolerance as a priority task of the international community. Stepped-up efforts at the national level to prevent and eliminate those phenomena were essential. A presidential decree on measures to coordinate action by State bodies in combating fascism and other forms of political extremism had entered into force in the Russian Federation in March 1995; it provided for a range of measures to prevent the stirring up of racial, national and religious discord and intolerance. In order to strengthen domestic legislation guaranteeing equality, the Russian Federation was interested in the speedy preparation and dissemination by the Secretary-General of draft model laws against racial discrimination.

32. Education in the field of human rights and tolerance was an important factor in combating racism. Although his country had already taken steps in that regard, more remained to be done. The speedy development by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/146, of educational materials and training courses on human rights and combating racism were particularly relevant. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related

intolerance and other United Nations treaty-monitoring bodies should give due attention to the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities and provide information on how they were promoting observance of the Declaration. As requested in General Assembly resolution 49/146, the Secretary-General should continue the study on the effects of racial discrimination on the children of minorities and migrant workers in the fields of education, training and employment, and should submit specific recommendations.

33. In order to enhance the protection of minorities, contacts should be established between the inter-sessional group on minorities of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism. In addition, the inter-sessional group should consider the question of setting up a mechanism to prevent and settle disputes connected with minorities.

34. It was important to identify new types of racism and step up efforts to combat them. United Nations human rights bodies should investigate discrimination against ethnic minorities based on "historical justice" before that phenomenon gave rise to further conflicts. It would also be useful to conduct research and put forward conclusions on the effects of indirect forms of discrimination on the implementation of basic human rights, such as freedom of movement.

35. Mr. CONTINI (France), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that his delegation deeply regretted the surprising, arbitrary and unjust connection drawn at the previous meeting by the representative of Papua New Guinea between the elimination of racism and nuclear testing. That manner of thinking represented a confusion of topics, an amalgam which appeared deleterious to the harmonious and non-political progress of the work of the Committee.

36. With regard to the substance of the issue, he wished to reiterate that his country was carrying out its final nuclear tests with a view to a definitive end to testing, which would be enshrined in its choice of the zero option under the Test Ban Treaty.

37. Mr. RAI (Papua New Guinea), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that in his statement he had only been reflecting the outrage of the leaders of the countries of the South Pacific, whose concerns had been dismissed by the French Government as irrelevant. In his view, that constituted racial discrimination. Furthermore, if those concerns had been respected, the tests would have been carried out in the Atlantic Ocean. His country, along with the others in the region, firmly opposed any continuation of nuclear testing in the South Pacific by the French Government.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FIFTIETH SESSION

Official Records

THIRD COMMITTEE
5th meeting
held on
Tuesday, 10 October 1995
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 5th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. TSHERING (Bhutan)

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AGENDA ITEM 103: ELIMINATION OF RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 104: RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION (continued)

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95-81499 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 103: ELIMINATION OF RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (continued) (A/50/18, A/50/425-S/1995/787, A/50/467, 468, 476 and 493)

AGENDA ITEM 104: RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION (continued) (A/50/485, A/50/390 and Add.1 and A/50/407)

1. Mr. GLÈLÈ-AHANHANZO (Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights) introduced the report on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (A/50/476), in accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/147 of 23 December 1994. He listed the chapters comprising the report and noted that it also contained views of Governments and non-governmental organizations received since the publication of his previous report (A/49/677). It also contained sections on the analysis of anti-Semitism, the situation of housekeepers of Indian, Sri Lankan, Bengali and Philippine origin in Kuwait and allegations of racist and xenophobic incidents in Germany. The response to the handling of those matters on the part of the Governments of Kuwait and Germany was explained in paragraph 17.

2. He then turned to the missions he had conducted between October 1994 and October 1995 to the United States of America, Brazil, Germany and France. In the report submitted to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-first session on the first of those missions, he had arrived at the conclusion that historical, sociological, psychological and structural factors were behind the subtle forms of racism and racial discrimination that lingered in the United States. In the case of Brazil, the situation was highly complex, to the extent that the cause-and-effect relationship between the economic and social status of the excluded groups or social sectors and the history of the marginalization of Blacks, Indians and mestizos of all kinds should be analysed with reference to historical factors which attended the founding of Brazil, such as slavery and colonization, and its socio-economic evolution. Germany, which was facing a resurgence of Nazism and the racist, anti-Semitic and xenophobic extreme right, had left behind the most acute phase of attacks and arson, but appeared to be coming up against xenophobia in daily life. Priority attention was being given to Germans coming from the collapsed Soviet empire. In France, society and civilization itself were in crisis because of the growing xenophobia which made foreigners into scapegoats. The true problem of the times was Islam, which was the second largest religion in the country. Terrorist attacks added to fear, rejection and contempt of foreigners, making the situation even more difficult. The French people, however, were capable of meeting that challenge. Reports on the missions to Brazil, Germany and France would be submitted to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-second session.

3. In general, it should be noted that organized and extraordinary manifestations of racism and anti-Semitism were tending to diminish, because in the countries most affected - Germany, France and the United States - legal and administrative steps had been taken to combat them. Nevertheless, racist behaviour and attitudes persisted, although in more subtle forms. Economic, religious and social reasons were being put forward to justify the revival and encouragement of racial discrimination. Legislation on immigration was becoming

increasingly strict, and it was more difficult to obtain visas. All the ills of the host country were attributed to foreigners, while their contribution to the nation's economic development was forgotten. Short-term solutions must be found to promote integration and acceptance of foreigners, whereas the long-term solution lay in human rights education. The United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004) should find expression in practical programmes for the teaching of human rights and cultural pluralism. Furthermore, the General Assembly could adopt a resolution requesting the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to take into account in its programme budget the elaboration of a research programme designed to incorporate the topic of human rights into school curricula.

4. Finally, among the other conclusions and recommendations in his report he highlighted the need for States, on ratification of human rights instruments, to refrain from making reservations or to withdraw those already made. Furthermore, it was important that the granting of visas to nationals of countries of the South should be less restrictive. The mass media must also make an effort to avoid propagating racist prejudices and stereotypes, and radical measures were needed to curb radio stations that promoted ethnic or racial hatred. He recommended that following the example of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre in France, the General Assembly should establish a mechanism for monitoring the use of the media to incite hatred and racial discrimination.

5. Mr. TELLES RIBEIRO (Brazil) said that, in addressing agenda items 103 and 104, his delegation wished to reaffirm its commitment to the eradication of all forms of racism and racial discrimination in the world so that all members of international society could enjoy democratic values. Brazilian society was based upon genuine diversity of races and ethnic origins and the respect for the principle of equality among human beings. Brazil was convinced that only through dialogue, tolerance and openness could racial questions be properly addressed. That could be seen from the Brazilian Government's tenth periodic report submitted under article 9 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which faithfully reflected the situation in Brazil as a result of a democratic process of consultation between the Government and society. With the submission of that report, Brazil confirmed the importance attached to complete eradication of racial discrimination.

6. The appointment of a Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance indicated the deep concern raised in the international community by those tendencies, among which "ethnic cleansing" gave special cause for alarm. Brazil had been a sponsor of the resolution adopted on that matter and, on several occasions, had stressed the need to provide the Special Rapporteur with all possible means to fulfil his mandate. In the spirit of openness and transparency which had prevailed in Brazil's attitude in the field of human rights, the Government had met with the Special Rapporteur, who had visited the country in June 1995. He had talked with authorities, congressmen and representatives of non-governmental organizations in order to form a comprehensive view of the situation in that field. The Government had taken note of the comments contained in his preliminary report, and was awaiting with interest the complete report that the Special Rapporteur would submit to the Commission on Human Rights in 1996.

Brazil hoped that all countries receiving a visit would extend the necessary cooperation for the fulfilment of his mandate.

7. Recent events had once again brought the question of self-determination to the centre of the international community's concerns. Newly independent States had been welcomed as Members of the United Nations, reinforcing the universal character of the Organization. Brazil had, on numerous occasions, supported the struggle of those peoples to exercise their free will and determine their own destiny; however, it considered that the relationship between the scope of self-determination and the protection of the human rights of minorities was a very complex one. Misconceptions of the issue could encourage separatism based on ethnic considerations. It should be clearly stated that self-determination was a fundamental human right of those who suffered under colonialism and other forms of foreign domination. It should not be used to threaten the territorial integrity and political unity of independent States under legitimate Governments which fully respected the democratic principles and the rights of minorities. From that perspective, democracy was the determining factor in differentiating self-determination from actions aimed at fragmentation. The key challenge was to seek ways and means of supporting democratic and representative political systems for the benefit of all.

8. Mr. SOKHONA (Mauritania) said that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed the freedom and equality of all human beings and rejected racist doctrines as the most destructive form of denial of the equality of all persons. The dismantling of apartheid, which was a triumph for all peoples, did not mean, however, the end of the fight against racism and racial discrimination. The General Assembly had thus proclaimed the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, and the World Conference on Human Rights had devoted a chapter of its final document to equality, dignity and tolerance and had recognized the elimination of racism and racial discrimination as one of the primary objectives of the international community.

9. Currently, there were numerous covert racist or xenophobic movements, groups or persons. They exploited existing confusion and unawareness to arouse the unsuspecting masses against other sectors of the population, in some cases against ethnic groups and more frequently against immigrants. Another danger presented by such movements and groups was their exploitation of the freedoms offered under the rule of law to undermine the very foundations of those freedoms. The scarcity of resources and the deterioration of socio-economic conditions created a fertile ground for the spread of racist and xenophobic ideas. Not only were developing countries affected, given the unfavourable economic international climate, but also industrialized countries, where immigrant communities were increasingly the target of xenophobic, racist and intolerant acts. Every country in the world was affected by the problem, since whenever an outrage was committed against any man, woman or child, it was an attack upon the dignity of all humankind.

10. With the upsurge in racist and xenophobic acts came the risk that such acts might become trivialized. In that regard, he stressed the relevance of the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights, which reflected a thorough understanding of the trend; there was no doubt that the implementation of those recommendations would contribute significantly to

the elimination of all contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance. Nevertheless, he noted that 50 years after the establishment of the United Nations, the very fact that the question remained on the agenda represented, in itself, a failure for the international community. The best way of solving and eradicating the problem would be to improve solidarity since, once genuine solidarity existed among peoples and individuals, the sources of racism and racial discrimination would disappear. Combined efforts should be made to create a more supportive, more interdependent and more united world.

11. Mr. ROWE (Australia) said that his country had a particular interest in combating racism and its effects on its indigenous and multicultural population. The United Nations had played a crucial role in the fight against racism; currently, the number of States parties to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination stood at 143. Australia urged those countries which had not yet ratified the Convention to do so and all States parties to the Convention to make the requisite declaration to enable direct communication of complaints by individuals to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. To ensure the monitoring of State compliance with their treaty obligations, Governments should agree, inter alia, to the amendment to the Convention providing for funding for the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination under the regular United Nations budget.

12. The effectiveness of United Nations action aimed at eliminating racism could be enhanced by coordinating several important initiatives currently under way. The Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination was the central United Nations programme of activity. However, the Programme of Action of the Third Decade should be considered in the context of the Decade for Human Rights Education and the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People and, wherever possible, efforts should be made to ensure complementarity between the programmes of action for those three decades. Thus, since the world's indigenous populations were victims of particular forms of racism and racial discrimination, the Programme of Action for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People should form a natural complement to the Programme for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination.

13. Racism currently found expression in varied forms. Millions of people were affected by deadly conflicts within States. "Ethnic cleansing" had been witnessed in conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda. Those were just two of the numerous devastating internal conflicts that characterized the world scene. Although ethno-nationalist or religious claims were the most common source of conflict within States, ethnic or religious difference was not in itself a prelude to conflict. Australia was just one example, among many, of a successful multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society. Diversity could be seen as a source of creativity and productivity. That was the message of the Global Cultural Diversity Conference, the first of its kind, held in Australia in April 1995, which had brought together people from around the world to examine the social, cultural, economic and political dimensions of diversity.

14. Notwithstanding the success of multiculturalism, Australia still faced problems of racism and racial discrimination, in particular with respect to its

indigenous population. The legacy of past injustices was still evident in indicators of lower life expectancy, poor health, lower educational and employment status and intolerably high levels of incarceration. The Government of Australia was conscious of the situation and was taking steps to ensure that the human rights of indigenous Australians were fully respected and protected. One such step was the 1993 Native Title Act governing the land ownership rights of indigenous peoples, which had been adopted by the Commonwealth Parliament and had rejected once and for all the legal fiction of terra nullius. All Australian States and Territories had enacted complementary legislation within the framework of that Act. The year 1995 marked an important milestone in Australia's efforts to combat racism: the twentieth anniversary of the federal anti-discrimination legislation, the Racial Discrimination Act of 1975, implementing the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. An evaluation and review of the Act had been initiated with a view to producing a package of significant amendments to ensure that the Act addressed systemic discrimination, facilitated dispute resolution and was more accessible and effective. The review was timely, given the social, political and demographic changes in Australia over the previous 20 years. Similarly, 1995 would also see the adoption of the Racial Hatred Act, which would enable Australia to withdraw its one reservation to the Convention.

15. Mr. POERNOMO (Indonesia) said that in its five decades of struggle against racism and racial discrimination, the United Nations had experienced a considerable degree of success, most notably in ending apartheid. The two World Conferences to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, in 1978 and 1983 respectively, reflected the determination of the international community to take effective action and to attain a more just, secure and stable world order. Nevertheless, the world had been witness to a resurgence of racist acts and to more subtle forms of racial discrimination such as misguided nationalism and "ethnic cleansing", which remained a source of violence and instability in all regions.

16. The fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations offered an appropriate opportunity to reaffirm that the fight against racism and racial discrimination was a global priority and to give renewed impetus to efforts to achieve the goals of the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination. In that regard, it should be noted that at the Second World Conference on Human Rights in 1993 the international community had stipulated that the speedy and comprehensive elimination of all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance was a priority task and that Governments had been urged in its Programme of Action to take immediate measures and develop strong policies to prevent and combat all forms and manifestations of racism, xenophobia and intolerance. In that connection, his delegation considered that the publication and distribution of model legislation on racism and racial discrimination could be of use to Governments in the enactment of such measures. His country was committed to following up the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the Vienna Conference. Moreover, efforts to combat racism and racial discrimination were essential to achieving not only the goals established at Vienna two years earlier, but also those set forth at San Francisco 50 years earlier. His country's commitment to that task derived from its national Constitution, which sought the establishment of abiding social justice and

peace. Moreover, as a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, his country promoted the universal ideal of justice, openness and non-discrimination.

17. The initiatives of the United Nations continued to be central to the eradication of all forms of racism and manifestations of xenophobia. The Programme of Action for the Third Decade provided the international community with an effective vehicle for achieving that goal. The Programme of Action had been formulated bearing in mind the global economic situation and the budgetary restraints affecting many Member States, without losing sight of those activities considered essential to achieving long-term goals. Unfortunately, activities relating to the Third Decade were hampered by a lack of financing. The Centre for Human Rights had difficulty initiating activities relating to the Third Decade because of a lack of human and financial resources. Resource constraints were being experienced throughout the system. However, if the Decade was to meet with success, a solution must be found to that problem. His country, which was a multi-ethnic State, attached considerable importance to achieving the objectives of the Third Decade and was determined to work towards a global solution to the problem.

18. Mr. SHAKOOR KHAN (Pakistan) said that both the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed the dignity of the human person and called for the promotion of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without discrimination as to race, sex, language or religion. The United Nations had since codified international standards regarding racism and racial discrimination in 13 conventions, declarations and protocols. As a symbol of international cooperation, over a period of decades to combat racism, the United Nations had succeeded in eliminating the practice of apartheid and had included South Africa in the community of nations.

19. Many manifestations of racial discrimination currently haunted and plagued the world. Throughout the colonial epoch, racism and racial discrimination had been an inseparable part of the doctrines justifying colonial and foreign domination. In the current era, those practices had acquired new forms and millions of human beings continued to be victims of discrimination because of their colour, caste or ethnic origin. In the Balkans, Serbian aggression and genocide against the defenceless people of Bosnia and Herzegovina had revived racial and religious hatred. Crimes against humanity had been committed in the region in flagrant violation of the International Bill of Human Rights and other international instruments. The response of the international community had been delayed and inadequate, and its inaction had merely served to embolden the aggressors in their campaign of terror and repression. Now that there was a chance for peace, it was essential to ensure that the perpetrators of those crimes were held accountable and punished under international law. The lesson to be learned from the tragedy of that war was that the international community must act firmly and with determination whenever the monsters of racism and racial discrimination posed a threat, in order to save millions of people from extermination and systematic discrimination, which could inflict irreparable damage to world peace and to the United Nations.

20. The growing phenomenon of xenophobia and related intolerance were the worst forms of racism and racial discrimination. In many parts of the world, as the international community stood by, indifferent, the rights of immigrants, migrant

workers, refugees and minorities were being violated in pursuance of the doctrine of racial superiority. Instances of discrimination against Muslim minorities had increased in several countries, where Muslims had become the favourite target of racist and fascist groups which killed innocent persons in attacks prompted by religious hatred.

21. To ensure the coexistence of civilizations, a new world order could not be built on the basis of castes and races. The tendency to equate Islam with fundamentalism and terrorism was a dangerous development that must be resisted at all costs. The concepts of terrorism and extremism were totally alien and inapplicable to Islamic religion and tradition. At the Seventh Islamic Summit Conference of the Organization of the Islamic Conference held at Casablanca in December 1994, a resolution had been adopted calling for efforts to combat attempts to present a distorted image of Islam and Muslims as a pretext for justifying aggression against Muslim countries and peoples and the occupation of those countries. In addition, the phenomenon of the caste system, which could be characterized as multiple apartheid, also must be addressed openly with a view to mitigating the suffering of millions of people living a life of bondage and discrimination which divided them into upper and lower echelons, segregated them and excluded them from the political, economic, social and cultural spheres of society.

22. With respect to the Programme of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, all countries should allocate greater financial and human resources to the social and education sectors in order to eliminate the causes of racial tensions. In his country, whose population reflected an ethnic mixture created by successive waves of migrants, his Government had systematically extended moral, political and material support to all peoples struggling against racial discrimination and apartheid. His country was among those which had taken the initiative of placing the issue of apartheid on the agenda of the United Nations and which had used all possible means to support the struggle of the people of South Africa against racism. It had been among the first countries to sign and ratify the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and, together with Nigeria, had drafted the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid. The people of his country, guided by the precepts of equality and brotherhood preached by Islam and enshrined in the Constitution, would continue to work for the complete elimination of all forms of racial discrimination throughout the world.

23. His country believed that the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination had made a commendable contribution. Accordingly, it urged all Member States to fulfil their financial obligations by paying their arrears in order to help the Committee to overcome its serious financial crisis and thereby enhance its efforts to eradicate all forms of racism and racial discrimination.

The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FIFTIETH SESSION

Official Records

THIRD COMMITTEE
6th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 11 October 1995
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 6th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. TSHERING (Bhutan)

later: Mrs. ALVAREZ (Vice-Chairman) (Dominican Republic)

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* Items considered together.

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 103: ELIMINATION OF RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (continued) (A/50/18, A/50/425-S/1995/787, A/50/467, 468, 476 and 493)

AGENDA ITEM 104: RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION (continued) (A/50/390 and Add.1, 407 and 485)

1. Mr. AHMAD (Malaysia) said that it was clear from the report on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (A/50/476) that racial discrimination was on the rise and that xenophobia was becoming disturbingly common. The ethnic cleansing and genocide carried out in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Rwanda were deeply troubling. The Programme of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination must continue to address the causes of racism and racial discrimination through concrete programmes aimed at eradicating those phenomena.

2. Malaysia reaffirmed its support for the universal realization of the right of peoples to self-determination, including the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to an independent Palestinian State. The recent agreements between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel should contribute to the establishment of a such State. Elsewhere, however, the right to self-determination had been challenged and, in some cases, violated by mercenaries. The recent overthrow of the Government of the Comoros by mercenaries should be universally condemned. Mercenaries undermined the security of small States, prolonged conflicts, caused flows of refugees and adversely affected economic development. Concerted collective efforts were necessary in order to draw up and enforce laws against the recruitment, financing and use of mercenaries, since they violated the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States.

3. Ms. FRITSCHE (Liechtenstein) said that her country, through its proposal concerning self-determination, sought to provide a means, short of full independence, whereby the reasonable aspirations of distinct communities within States could find expression through different types of self-administration, ranging, according to the circumstances, from limited self-administration to something approaching internal self-government. That would be achieved on the basis of agreement between States and groups within them. Where disinterested help from outside would be useful, there should be some modest procedural framework for putting such self-administration into effect. Liechtenstein's proposal aimed to create a mechanism whereby minority groups seeking ways to assert their distinctive identity could pursue reasonable aspirations.

4. Her country had given a grant to Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs to establish a research programme on self-determination. A number of research studies had already been completed by distinguished scholars and two conferences had been held on the issues dealt with in those studies. A report on the conferences would be circulated in document A/50/492. The conference papers, written by leading scholars, covered an extremely broad field in terms of geography and intellectual disciplines and were directly relevant to matters of great contemporary international concern.

Liechtenstein would present the papers to the Secretary-General as part of its contribution to the commemoration of the Organization's fiftieth anniversary and planned to publish a book containing the conference papers and commentaries on them early in 1996.

5. Mr. ROGOV (Russian Federation) said it was alarming that self-determination was increasingly being used to violate basic human rights and freedoms, resulting in ethnic cleansing, discrimination and many thousands of refugees. The right to self-determination was a right of peoples and must not be usurped by individuals or groups. Self-determination frequently turned into aggressive separatism, which unfailingly caused human suffering and the denial of basic rights.

6. The international community should give greater attention to the situation of national minorities. The denial of human rights on the basis of ethnic origin created tension and potential conflict. The right to self-determination must not be implemented to the detriment of the interests of minorities. At the current time, violations of the rights of national minorities constituted a new challenge to international security. That question was vital to the Russian Federation, since 25 million ethnic Russians lived beyond its borders.

7. Self-determination was inseparable from the right of each individual to enjoy civil and political rights on the basis of equality and non-discrimination. The right to participate in the administration of one's country was a major political right. On 17 December 1995, the multinational people of the Russian Federation would determine their future by electing their representatives to the State Duma. It was precisely through elections, not separatism, that peoples must establish their political status and ensure their economic, social and cultural development.

8. Mrs. Alvarez (Dominican Republic), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

9. Ms. SAPCANIN (Bosnia and Herzegovina) said that from its inception, her democratically elected Government had been dedicated to maintaining the country's centuries-old traditions of pluralism, multiculturalism, tolerance and coexistence of various religious and ethnic groups on the basis of constitutional guarantees. In spite of that, racism in Bosnia and Herzegovina - manifested in ultranationalism and ethnic cleansing imported from Serbia - had victimized more than half of the original population for three and a half years. More than 200,000 Bosnians had been killed and a multitude of abuses had been perpetrated through expulsions, torture, rape and herding into concentration camps. Nationalist extremists had even sought to eradicate evidence of a successfully shared past by destroying historical and cultural monuments and sites.

10. The numerous efforts by the international community to bring peace to the region had failed because of its strategy of appeasement and the intransigence of the Belgrade regime and the Serb commanders in Bosnia. Humanitarian assistance was no substitute for a resolute response to terrorism and aggression. The citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina were still targeted for murder or expulsion by that regime and its surrogates. Another 3,500 non-Serbs had recently been expelled from Prijedor in the gruesome process of "ethnic

cleansing". Men had again been separated and taken to unknown places. As indicated in the Secretary-General's report in document S/1995/755, there was credible evidence that mass executions had taken place in Srebrenica and Žepa during the past summer. The fact that some 8,000 Bosnian men from those areas still remained unaccounted for further heightened such fears.

11. The international community must compel those who continued to use terrorism and genocide as tools of aggression to halt their criminal behaviour and create an environment for peace. The war in Bosnia was a war between a democratic, tolerant and open society and an aggressive, totalitarian, closed political system. A profound and far-reaching democratization was necessary, first and foremost in Serbia. The Belgrade regime, which was the main negotiator for the Serb side, regularly committed human rights abuses against minority populations within its own borders. Guaranteeing the highest standards of human rights and freedoms for all must be a top priority. Free and democratic direct elections by popular vote must be ensured. All criminals must be brought before the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, and refugees and displaced persons must be able to return to vote in those elections and live in a free and open society. Fulfilment of those requirements should be a prerequisite for any future assistance to the region, thus clearly indicating that aggression and dictatorship would not pay. The United States, the Contact Group on Bosnia and Herzegovina, the European Union and others involved in the peace process must ensure that there was no legitimatization of "ethnic cleansing" in the course of a peace settlement. Her country's unalterable objective was a democratic Bosnia and Herzegovina within its internationally recognized borders and with full restoration of the highest standards of ethnic, religious and political rights and freedoms for all citizens.

12. Mr. BORDA (Colombia) said that 50 years after the United Nations had been founded, largely in response to the most hideous genocide in history, which had been inspired by racism, the most virulent forms of racism and xenophobia were still in evidence. Therefore, although circumstances had changed and important successes had been achieved, the United Nations must continue with renewed vigour its debates on ways to eliminate those phenomena.

13. However, two factors were hampering the conduct of those debates: less time had been allotted to the item in the organization of the Committee's work, and the report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance had once again been distributed late. He hoped that both problems would be corrected.

14. Since the report of the Special Rapporteur (A/50/476) provided the Committee with valuable information and recommendations, his delegation was concerned about the precariousness of the resources available to the Special Rapporteur for the conduct of his work. That situation should be redressed promptly.

15. Like the fight against racism, the right of peoples to self-determination had been the object of many successful United Nations efforts, and was still a very relevant issue in view of the disappearance of bipolarity in global relations. Colombia welcomed the progress made in the negotiations between

Palestine and Israel, and believed that the exercise of self-determination by the Palestinian people would help bring peace to the region.

16. The report of the Special Rapporteur on the use of mercenaries (A/50/390 and Add.1) highlighted the need to prevent situations where soldiers became mercenaries in the service of terrorists, drug traffickers or other groups seeking to destabilize duly constituted political regimes. Recent cases of mercenary activity, especially in the Comoros and Sierra Leone, should be severely condemned by the international community, as should the existence of legally registered private entities that engaged in the training, hiring and placement of mercenaries.

17. Mrs. KABA (Côte d'Ivoire) said that while institutionalized racial discrimination had disappeared, it still manifested itself in more subtle but equally oppressive ways. The media's treatment of the issue had helped political parties of the extreme right to gain power. Such parties represented a serious threat to peace, democracy and human rights. Legislation was continuing to be adopted which restricted immigration or denied immigrants their full rights, thereby creating many social problems. Such discriminatory legislation, giving legitimacy to racism and xenophobia, must be vigorously confronted at all levels. The issue was particularly disturbing in small countries which depended on economic integration for their survival; xenophobic and tribal feelings were incompatible with their desire to build large blocs capable of withstanding the demands of the market and economic competition.

18. In larger countries, the refusal to share prosperity with others had led to many acts of violence, of which women were the main victims. Before a solution could be found to the problem, it must be recognized as existing, then legislated against, and the perpetrators of violence severely punished. The media should be obliged to adopt a code of conduct outlawing inflammatory material and promoting peace and tolerance. Human rights courses emphasizing tolerance should be introduced at all educational levels.

19. Côte d'Ivoire was a multi-ethnic country that attached great importance to respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and human dignity. Despite its ethnic diversity, it had maintained a climate of peace and harmony. By striving for social integration and encouraging the participation of peoples of different ethnic origin in development efforts, it had made significant economic and social progress.

20. Her delegation welcomed all initiatives to combat contemporary forms of racism, and thought that foundations and other private sources should be encouraged to contribute additional resources to that end.

21. Mr. COLOMA (Chile) said that his country was concerned about the persistence of racism and the resurgence of xenophobic and discriminatory practices, especially against immigrants and refugees from developing countries. It therefore strongly supported the work of all the relevant United Nations bodies in that area. Given the complexity of the problem, whose root causes could be traced to economic, social and religious factors, Chile endorsed the proposal to convene a world conference against racism, racial and ethnic discrimination, xenophobia and other contemporary forms of intolerance.

22. In dealing with the issue, it was important to recognize its universal nature and its incompatibility with the contemporary values of democracy, freedom and development; to emphasize preventive measures, such as those suggested in the Special Rapporteur's report (A/50/476) and in the Programme of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination; to accept the principle of non-discrimination as a component of international public law and to strengthen universal acceptance of that principle as a rule of jus cogens; to devise a preventive mechanism or a set of emergency measures with which the United Nations could prevent situations of discrimination from erupting into conflicts; and to encourage the involvement of non-governmental organizations, especially at the grass-roots level, in preventive and consciousness-raising activities.

23. Mrs. KABBAJ (Morocco) said her country considered that the Programme of Action for the Third Decade was the best framework for translating ideals into action such as legislation and education which would bring about a social order based on equality and respect for the rights and dignity of others. She therefore supported the proposal to hold a world conference in 1997 against racism, racial and ethnic discrimination, xenophobia and other contemporary forms of intolerance. However, her delegation was concerned about the funding available for the Third Decade. An international effort was called for in order to guarantee the necessary funds.

24. Her delegation warmly welcomed the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, proclaimed in General Assembly resolution 48/163, and considered that its programme of action should contribute to the enjoyment by indigenous people of all their rights and spare them the ill effects of marginalization and exclusion.

25. Morocco had made a significant contribution to the adoption in General Assembly resolution 45/158 of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. Unfortunately, that important instrument had not yet entered into force, because of the small number of States which had ratified or acceded to it. Her country therefore urged States to show their support for the Convention, which would guarantee migrant workers their rights and dignity, conserve their cultural identity and protect them from racism.

26. Morocco, as one of the initiators of the United Nations Year for Tolerance, had celebrated it enthusiastically and had spared no effort to achieve its aims. Her country had always provided asylum for whoever needed it, whatever their religion, origin or race. She hoped that the international community's work to promote tolerance would result in all peoples and individuals being permitted to enjoy all their rights, and find peace, security and happiness in respect for their values, cultures and dignity.

27. Mr. ELDEEB (Egypt) welcomed the recent signature by Palestine and Israel of the Interim Agreement as a step towards full enjoyment by the Palestinians of all their legitimate rights, and hoped for similar developments with regard to Syria and Lebanon.

28. He expressed his country's full agreement with the report on the use of mercenaries (A/50/390 and Add.1), such use having damaging effects upon peoples' exercise of the right to self-determination. Recent events in the Comoros had indicated the need for action to prevent the recurrence of that phenomenon.

29. The ratification by nearly 150 States of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination had demonstrated that the terrible crimes which had taken place in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Rwanda, and elsewhere, were quite unacceptable to world opinion. It was important for all States to ratify all conventions relating to human rights issues.

30. He suggested the following measures to confront racism: the preparation of human rights courses by UNESCO, UNICEF and the Centre for Human Rights for use at all educational levels in all countries; the mobilization of governmental and non-governmental resources locally and nationally to combat racism, eradicate existing racist regulations and ideas and publicize every racist incident; the introduction by States of more liberal immigration policies for nationals of developing countries, and increased cultural interchange and respect for the cultural, religious and racial characteristics of all peoples; a ban on all broadcasts likely to incite racial or religious hatred; and the development of an international mechanism to monitor the use of educational methods to promote peaceful coexistence and tolerance.

31. In conclusion, he stated his country's willingness to cooperate with all Member States and relevant United Nations bodies in order to achieve the Organization's purposes.

32. Mr. PADILLA (Philippines), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the past few years had witnessed horrendous human rights abuses arising from racial and ethnic tensions, as exemplified by the tragedies in Cambodia, Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. The report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (A/50/476) and the report of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (A/50/18) described the ideological, demographic and economic factors underlying contemporary racism. Moreover, the Special Rapporteur claimed that there were indications that racial discrimination was growing, fed by economic, religious and social issues.

33. Despite the existence of international instruments and principles on the settlement of disputes, such as Article 33 of the Charter of the United Nations, international indifference had allowed many crisis situations to develop into full-scale conflicts. Consequently, Governments should strengthen legislation against all forms of intolerance and should ratify or accede to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the International Covenants on Human Rights. Educational efforts in the context of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education would also be helpful.

34. The Group of 77 and China felt that the mass media were a powerful means of disseminating information on human rights and should be enlisted to perform that function, with the support of non-governmental organizations. In addition, they

should adopt self-monitoring mechanisms to avoid propagating racist prejudice and stereotypes. Likewise, the potential of civil society to help combat racism should not be underestimated.

35. As to the proposal to hold an international conference on racism and related intolerance, he wondered whether it might not be useful to address the issue of racism together with that of migration. The Group of 77 and China also strongly recommended that funding priority should be given to the programmes for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination and to the Special Rapporteur.

36. Ms. TOMIČ (Slovenia) said that the "ethnic cleansing" processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Rwanda proved that the prevention of discrimination and respect for the existence of pluralistic societies were crucial to the achievement of world peace. It was extremely important not to allow those acts to be forgotten and to bring their perpetrators to justice, in accordance with the principle of individual criminal responsibility, so as to set examples that would help prevent the recurrence of such acts. Meanwhile, the non-institutionalized forms of intolerance that arose in everyday life as a result of ignorance and fear of diversity should be addressed through the promotion of the values of peaceful coexistence and cultural pluralism.

37. The different components of the United Nations system for preventing and combating racism and intolerance should coordinate their efforts. Moreover, the various relevant United Nations activities, such as the programmes for the decades on racism, human rights education and indigenous people, should be interrelated and mutually reinforcing. In addition, collaboration between United Nations experts and non-governmental organizations, as exemplified at the most recent session of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, should be encouraged.

38. In view of the heavy workload and financial crisis of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, she appealed to all countries that were in arrears to pay their outstanding contributions. She also urged the States parties to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination to ratify the amendment that would enable the Committee to receive funding from the regular budget of the United Nations. Her delegation welcomed the steps taken by that Committee to enhance its efficiency, as well as its proposals concerning early-warning measures and urgent procedures.

39. The right to self-determination, which her country fully recognized, could be exercised in different ways, as long as people were free to determine their political status and to pursue their economic, social and cultural development. She agreed with the view, expressed by Pope John Paul II in his recent address to the General Assembly, that further standard-setting was necessary in relation to the rights of nations. She welcomed the progress made in spelling out the rights of indigenous peoples, and felt that United Nations human rights bodies should conduct specific studies on contemporary questions of self-determination and other rights of peoples.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.